

Four Reasons Your Typically Developing Child Can Benefit from an Inclusive Preschool

Sunny Days Preschool is part of Pacific Autism Center for Education's Early Intervention program, but Sunny Days is also an "inclusive" preschool. This means that we serve both typically-developing children and children on the autism spectrum in an inclusive, welcoming environment. Parents of typically-developing children often will ask the question: *how will my child benefit from an inclusive classroom? Is it only beneficial for the children with special needs?*

As our teachers, therapists, and instructional specialists will tell you, an inclusive environment is enormously beneficial for typically developing children as well as for children on the autism spectrum. Here are four reasons why:

1) Small class size means individual attention

All children benefit from the excellent student/teacher ratios often found at inclusive preschools. Sunny Days typically operates at a no more than 3:1 student to adult ratio for typical students, which means your child will get individual attention and support! Every child at Sunny Days, whether typically developing or on the spectrum, gets a personalized education plan crafted around his or her current development and future developmental goals.

2) The staff is highly-qualified and motivated

Members of this preschool staff have to be especially qualified to work with children on the autism spectrum. They are also often motivated by the mission of inclusiveness, support, and child development—which means a happy environment! Also, therapists or special educators who work and consult with classroom teachers demonstrate strategies that teachers can use, making them a tremendous resource for *all* children.

3) Responsive teaching promotes kindergarten readiness

Responsive teaching molds teaching opportunities around the needs of the child, which supports creativity and exploratory learning. This teaching method also offers support in areas of need and builds upon strengths, which promotes kindergarten readiness.

4) Focus on social-emotional development

In inclusive preschools, social-emotional development can be just as important as academic skills. Sunny Days emphasizes specific social skills such as taking turns and sharing, as well as appropriate communication skills and social cues. Parents of typically developing children often remark on their children's confidence, self-esteem, empathy, and understanding of diversity. As a result, typically-developing children often go on to become leaders in their kindergarten and elementary classrooms!

Contact Karen Kennan, Assistant Executive Director,
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Sunny Days Preschool is a division of the Pacific Autism Center for Education (PACE)